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COUNTRY USSR/Poland

SUBJECT Foundry Machines -- Availability, Quality/
Maintenance of Polish-Soviet Border/Sovie

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Bases

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PLACE
ACQUIRED

NO. OF ENCLS.

(LISTED BELOW) (Encl. "A")

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SOURCE

1. In our shop we had no modern foundry machinery. The reason was that only foundries manufacturing first-class army products (tanks, artillery, ammunition, and other equipment) were supplied with modern machinery. Small shops such as ours had to build their own machinery and to rely on castoff equipment from army controlled foundries.
2. In our shop, we designed and built moulding machines and some foundry equipment for making cast-iron axle bushings and carriages. We began receiving additional equipment and machinery when the cast-iron bushings were found suitable for artillery carriages.
3. I have no idea where plants making moulding machines and sand mixers were located in the USSR. Such machines were produced as second-class products for army foundries or for first-class in smaller shops. I did notice that the machines were copied from patents stolen from abroad. They were manufactured very carelessly and without precision. Just prior to World War II the only precision machines in our plant were those imported from Germany and the UK. All others were very quick to rust and fall apart. When one wanted special fire brick for a foundry such as our's, it had to be obtained on the black market and the price was about 750 rubles for one-half ton.
4. I saw very modern foundry equipment facilities in Poland but only at the COP (Central Industrial Area in Silesia), and again the majority of the machines were imported from the UK and Germany.
5. Before 1939, villages, towns, and other settlements on the Soviet-Polish border were separated from the border by either a high brick, stone, or wooden fence. Sometimes barbed-wire was also on top of these fences. An area about 200 ft wide was cleared of trees and brush and then ploughed and smoothed to make visibility clear. On the Soviet side, border guards -- probably NKVD -- accompanied by watchdogs, performed guard duty. Some of the regions had a ten-mile deep so-called "no-man's land". All houses, trees, and other obstacles were removed from this zone.

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6. During 1940, the inhabitants of all settlements of 800 people or over in the Soviet-Polish border area were shipped to central Siberia; and in their place, Soviets from other Polish territories were settled. Although these replacements caused a great deal of excitement among inhabitants, they were fulfilled by the Soviet administration without effort. Special brigades, especially trained for this type of task, were used. They also had special equipment such as small windowless freight cars and large truck vans.
7. Roads in this area were of a soft surface without gravel or stone topping and were impassable during most of the early spring and fall.
8. in this Soviet-Polish border zone, border travel was controlled very strictly. No civilians were allowed in the border zone. All arriving and departing persons to and from border villages were checked, searched, and had their documents examined. Naturally all houses in these settlements were under constant control of NKVD border guards.
9. There were no Diesel or fuel oil burning locomotives on Polish railroads. They did have a Diesel driven motor called "Luctorpedoes". The only Diesel locomotives used by the Soviets were in oil well areas such as Baku and Batum. This would indicate that there was definitely a shortage of liquid fuels, lubricants, and greases for railroading. All oil products such as Diesel oil, gasoline, greases, etc, were under a careful distribution plan. All oil products for automobile and truck use were distributed under a plan and with permission of the chief director of "Naphtha Products Distribution Administration". Of course, poorly made substitutes were sometimes used; but inasmuch as they were destructive to vehicles, their users were accused of sabotage and severely punished. Certain lubricants and greases often found their way to the black market. Those conducting such a black market, received severe punishment when caught.
10. In 1940 and 1941 the Soviets built a so-called naphtha base. This was located about five miles east from the center of the city of Chortkov [see accompanying sketch - Encl (A)]. One side of the naphtha base was bordered by the railroad station "Wynhanka Horishna". On another side of the base was the Chortkov-Kopyczynci highway. Three concrete underground tanks were built, each of about 400 cubic feet capacity. This was only one of many standard-type bases which were built in many places -- usually near big cities. For example, I saw another such Naphtha Base, "Palahiche", a railroad station on the Chortkov-Stanislav railroad about twenty-five miles from Stanislav. Petroleum and gasoline stored in these naphtha bases were mostly products brought in from the USSR (Baku and Batum).
11. Railroad gauge used in this area was Soviet gauge rebuilt from European and US gauge.
12. The only type of field kitchen used by the Soviet Army and/or Air Force was one large kettle on a two-wheeled cart or trailer. It was used mostly by the Army Rifle Divisions. Fuel was wood and coal in an oven underneath the large kettle. I did see several small portable or hand-carried field kitchens, but only at a distance and I could not see what type of fuel was used.
13. On the Chortkov-Jagflinica highway, about five miles from Chortkov, the Soviets began building a large airdrome. This was in 1940-41. In July 1941 work was halted on concrete runways when the German Army approached. Runways were not completed and not in use, but I would gather from the width and thickness of the completed portion and from the length of the graded part that the largest of Soviet airplanes could use this field.

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Encl (A): - Sketch of city of Chortkov showing the Naphtha Base

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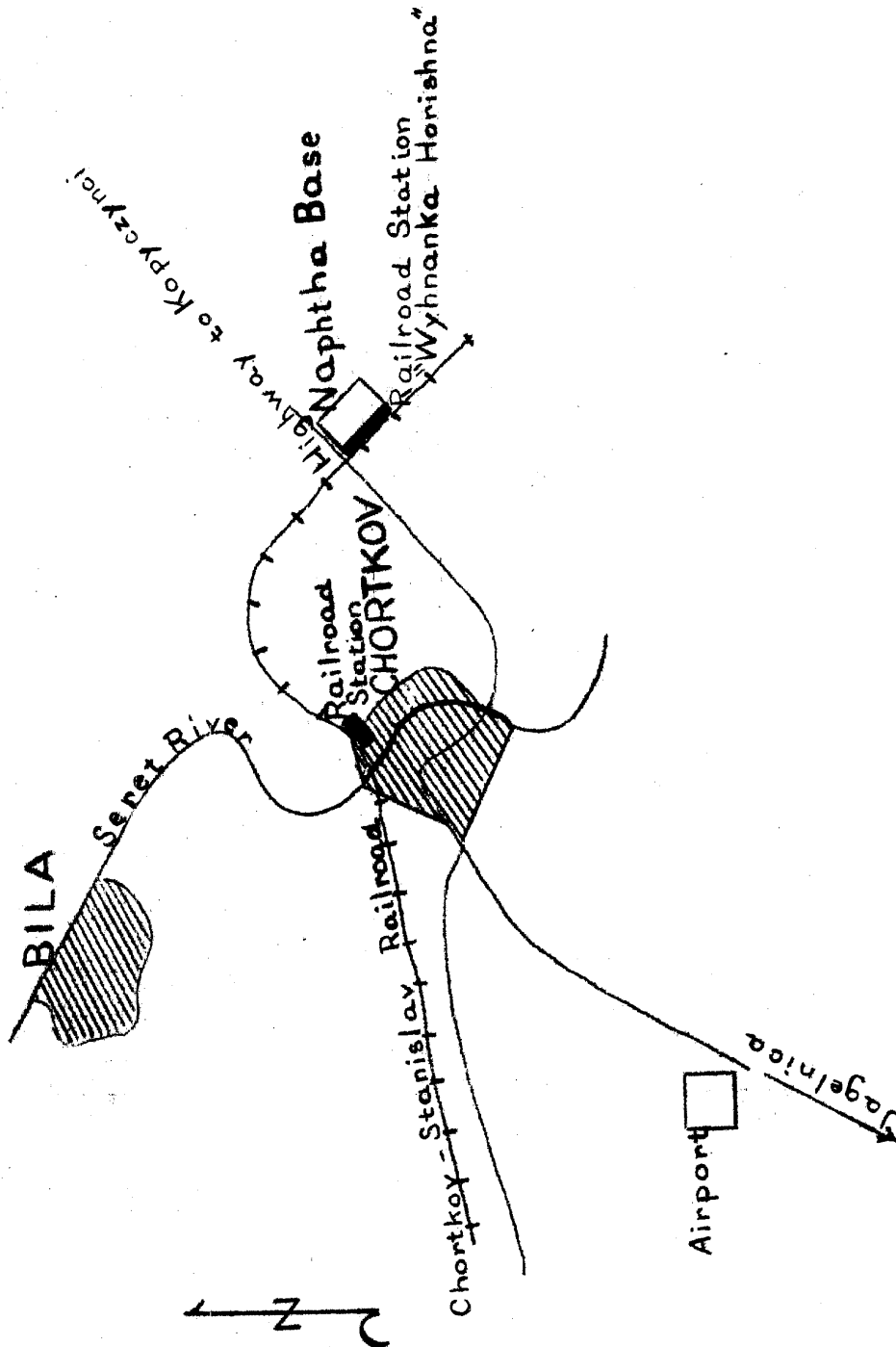
ENCLOSURE (A)

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SKETCH OF CITY OF CHORTKOV SHOWING THE NAPHTHA BASE

ENCLOSURE "A"



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